

# *The* EVANGEL

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## Letter From the Editor

Greetings in the name of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ! This edition of The Evangel is the second in a three-part series on Faith, Hope, and Love. Advent is a season about repentance and hope. It is a time to contemplate God's plan for salvation, how was laid out from before the foundation of the world, how He brought that plan to fruition through Israel, and how He ultimately completed salvation in Christ. Specifically, in my contribution to this meditation on hope, I want to focus on the covenant made with Abraham, and how it shows us God's plan and how Jesus would fulfill it. God promises Abraham many great things in Genesis 12:

*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you*

*And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.*

*I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you;*

*And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Gen. 12:2-3)*

While these promises seem general, we know from reading Galatians that there is a specific fulfillment of these promises: Christ. "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to the seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

The covenant is made in Genesis 15 where we see God "cut a covenant" with Abraham. God literally cuts animals in half and lays them down (Gen. 15:9-11). What a strange image! Here God is using a historic treaty practice from the Ancient Near East in which a greater king and a lesser king would take turns walking between the pieces of dead animals to indicate ascent to a treaty. This sounds gruesome—walking between cut up animals, but the animals symbolized that if one party were to break the covenant, they would be cut in half as well. This is how serious these promises were; if your end of the treaty was not upheld perfectly, you would most certainly be killed.

God causes Abraham to fall into a deep sleep. While he is asleep, a smoking oven and a burning torch appears and passes through the pieces of the animals (v. 17). The smoking oven and burning torch are a theophany—a physical manifestation of God's presence. God's passing through the pieces indicated His willingness to uphold His end of the covenant. Now, because he was asleep, God passed through a second time on Abraham's behalf, indicating His willingness to uphold Abraham's side of the covenant as well. God therefore takes the entire punishment for Abraham not living up to his side of the covenant on Himself. We see this fulfilled when Christ—God Himself—dies on the cross, taking on the punishment merited by Abraham and all people because of sin.

This is not the only part of the treaty. The specific promises laid out by God also have to do with inheriting the land of Israel. The land, however, does not only refer to the physical land of Israel. As we read in Hebrews 11:16, Abraham and his descendants desired "a better, that is, a heavenly country." They knew that this earthly land was not the ultimate goal, but that God was preparing an eternal home for them as well.

The coming of Jesus into the world, and the celebration of His incarnation at Christmas, is something that even Abraham, who lived thousands of years before the birth of Christ, looked forward to. The whole Old Testament was written to point to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ for our salvation. Now, having seen the historic birth of Christ, we can rejoice that God did indeed fulfill His promises. As Simeon exclaimed, and as we sing in our service of the sacrament, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen the salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." We have seen Christ. We trust that He will come again.

It may seem that we live in a perpetual Advent, waiting earnestly for Christ to return, but we have hope: God keeps His promises.

# Hopes and Fears

by TAALC Presiding Pastor Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins

## O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks was the Episcopal rector of Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Even as a young pastor, he was already renowned for his powerful preaching. Loved by young and old alike, this six-foot-six giant was equally at home standing among the adults or playing with the children.

One December day in 1868, Brooks decided to do something special for the Children's Christmas Program. He would write a carol based upon his visit to Jerusalem and Bethlehem three years before. So it was that Brooks came to write the lovely carol that we know today, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. He gave the lyrics to the church organist, Louis Redner, who wrote the tune in the nick of time. On Christmas Eve, Redner received his musical inspiration and on Christmas morning, he taught the children the new hymn. The first time that the stirring carol was heard was on Christmas Day, 1868.

The words were simple to sing, chosen for children's voices, but their meaning was profound. For example, here is one line that is filled with meaning:

***The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.***

## Hopes

How are the hopes of all the years met in Jesus? Perhaps, the most obvious hope of every human heart is for peace. We long for peace: peace of mind, peace in our homes, peace on earth. The glory of the Babe of Bethlehem is that He grows up to be the Crucified and Resurrected Son of God who establishes peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace who makes peace between God and humanity and creates peace among all people. There is unity across the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church because we who are joined by faith to Jesus are joined by Jesus to one another.

Perhaps, the universal hope of all human beings is simply for enough. We hope for enough food to fill us, enough clothing to cover us, enough home to shelter us, and enough money to provide for us. God knows our needs and He knows them intimately. This is true because God has lived among us, not as one in opulence

but as one of lowly birth. As a child, the holy One was laid in a manger. As an adult, the Messiah was stripped of His possessions. God knows our needs personally, and He has promised that He will provide for us more than enough. He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we can ask or even think.

Perhaps, the deepest hope of the human heart is to be loved. How wonderful that the Stranger in the Manger is God in flesh, come to love us. God makes the perfect display of His limitless love for us in the lowly infant who grows to become the Suffering Servant. Such is the love of God for us that He will spend the blood of His Son to save the soul of a slave, like you and me. We are loved by God; this fact is proven by His incarnation, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and most especially by His adoption. He has adopted us! We are the adopted and beloved children of God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. With His love in our hearts, we become those who love each other.

## Fears

How are the fears of all the years met in Jesus? Jesus meets our fears and destroys their power. Jesus meets our deepest and most pervasive fear, the fear of judgment. Sin tempts us and its memory torments us. We stand accused before God as sinful, shameful creatures. We are deserving of His punishment for what we have thought and said and done. What can stop God's judgment? What can conquer our sinful nature and sinful actions? What can remove our shame? Jesus has done all of this. Jesus has conducted the *great exchange* by taking our sins and shame upon Himself and exchanging them for His righteousness and holiness.

Jesus meets our fear of loneliness. We were created by God to be in a nuclear family, in a church family, and in the human family. One of the worst tortures imaginable is to separate a person from others, to place him or her in solitary confinement. But, Jesus has promised that He will never abandon us. He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He will be with us always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). In life and even in death, we will never be alone because Jesus will be with us.

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Jesus meets our final fear, the fear of death. The declarations of Jesus concerning death are powerful promises indeed. "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die" (John 11: 25-26). How can we trust such a grandiose claim? We believe the Word of Jesus because He has conquered death. He was crucified and rose on the third day. Jesus has destroyed the power of death and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. We no longer fear death because we know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). Neither life nor death, nor any created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8: 38-39).

Almost 150 years after it was first written, the precious Christmas Carol, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, is still true. Of course it is; it will be true forever. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Jesus. The hopes of all are met in Him and are fulfilled. The fears of all are met in Him and are destroyed. This holy season, whether you are a child or an adult, this Christmas hymn will remind you of a wondrous truth about the birth of the Son of God:

*O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
**The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight!***



## Installation of Rev. Dan Dapelo

*St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Napoleon, OH*

On October 16, 2016, Pastor Dan Dapelo was installed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Napoleon, OH. Attending and assisting at Rev. Dapelo's installation were Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins, Presiding Pastor of TAALC, Rev. Dean Stoner, National Missions Developer,, and Rev. Joe Dapelo, TAALC Pastor and former Seminarian of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

*Photos by Linda Sonnenberg*



# A Pastor Cares for Himself

## TAALC Annual Pastors' Conference 2016

by Rev. Richard P. Shields, President of American Lutheran Theological Seminary

We have examined several aspects of Pastoral Care, all of it with regard to caring for others. In this session we focus on the pastor caring for himself. Of all the topics we discuss, this is probably the one that receives the least attention. Yet, it is critical that we address this.

Let's take a moment to examine what we have learned in our pastoral training about caring for yourself. For those who have completed their seminary education prior to five years ago, was the issue of taking care of yourself ever addressed? Were major topics covered and resources provided on how to begin to take care of yourself? I know that when I was student here (CSL), we received the best theological education in the world. Yet not one word was given to caring for yourself, except as an incidental comment by one professor, in which the class was not even closely related to the topic.

Let's take a look at two Bible passages (OT and NT) that demonstrate that God is concerned about our own care, especially in leadership roles.

And Elijah was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat." Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the LORD came **again a second time** and touched him and said, "Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you." So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. (1 Kings 19:3-8)

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I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. (1 Timothy 5:21-23)



And then from Jesus' own life and ministry

But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray. (Luke 5:16)

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. (Luke 6:12)

And it happened that while He was praying alone... (Luke 9:18)

Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him. (Mark 1:12-13)

So while we find much support in the Bible to prepare and maintain our preaching and teaching, we find that God is also concerned about us as humans. Humans who have weaknesses, physical, emotional, mental needs. Humans who have experienced much in life. And yet, how often do we talk about this? Well, today we are talking about this. We will address at least five critical areas of life that require our attention, care, and preventative work.

As a cautionary note: You may read many statistics about pastors and problems such as: burn out, suicide, etc. They are often quoted as authoritative. The problem is that much of that data is at least 25 years old or older. And much has changed.

### 1.1. Physical

Our bodies are finite. What we could do years ago cannot be done. 35 years ago today I ran in the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington DC. It was grueling, but I had built myself to that level (running continuously for 3 hours and 46 minutes). But today? I am pleased if I can walk 35 minutes a day.

So what can we do about our physical needs? I think a critical thing involves knowing your own body. A routine physical can be a great asset to determine what's going on with your body. Depending on your status, medicine, physical exercise, stretching, etc. can all be effective in looking to your body's needs.

### Food

Likewise, what about diet? Despite the Facebook and Twitter fads of "bacon everything" foods can be good or bad for you. Each person is unique, but some stability and balance in diet, including times of eating, types of foods, and possible allergies to food will give you a better sense of what works and does not work for you. Some foods can make a person lethargic, or demonstrate signs of allergies. Interestingly the foods that we are allergic to are often the

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foods that we crave. There are tests that can be done to inform you about allergic reactions. You might be surprised.

### Activities

It is good to be involved in some regular physical/exercise activities. Walking, running, canoeing, weight-lifting, bowling, swimming, golfing (without a cart!), hunting, animal care and exercise, etc. The list is far greater than we can discuss. But any activity that gets you up and allows you to exert energy, and cause a little sweat is vital to maintain health. Team activities can provide for both physical and social needs for you. The one activity that is forbidden, is jumping—as in jumping to conclusions.

### Medical

God has given us gifts of doctors, nurses, and medicines, gifts for our benefit. Regular physicals provide a good barometer of our health. But you also have to be aware of your own body and its behavior. About 20 years ago I was told to take a medicine for a medical problem, but within a month, I started having very negative affects on major parts of my body. After three months I had to stop altogether. When I told the doctor about it, he was disappointed, but also knew the side effects of the drug. Listen to your body. Also over time, your body changes and so the needs for physical care change. It's not good or bad, but a reality of living in a sinful world with decaying bodies.

### Rest

This is probably the hardest for pastors to regulate, knowing when to rest, how long to rest, how to rest. Pastors are busy, active. Demands on time can provide a steady stream of activity, energy use, etc. But the body and mind can only take so much. It's okay to take time for rest. For decades I didn't know that.

I grew in a workaholic environment, living on a farm, and logging wood. My father's motto was: If the sun is up, you work. If the sun goes down in the winter, you work with a light. The ethic drove me in college, in the Navy, in seminary, in pastoral ministry. And it nearly killed me. I experienced a breakdown in 1998; many factors contributed to it, but the lack of sleep and rest did not help. The nine months prior, I was sleeping two hours a day.

Rest is critical. Those passages about Elijah and Jesus, moving away from the crowds, to rest are not just historical incidents, They are a reminder that our bodies can do great things, but they need rest and recuperation. When you have an operation or some kind of stopping of normal activity, the general rule of thumb is: For every day you are down, it takes seven days to recover. People have laughed at me for saying that, but when they go through operations or some other stoppage, they no longer laugh because it does take that long. It's okay to rest.

## 1. 2. Mental and Emotional Health

This is one of the most hidden aspects of caring for ourselves. When I had my breakdown, there was very little help during that deterioration, and especially for pastors, it was a sign of weakness. You have to know your mental and emotional health. Don't be afraid to ask others. If you are married, your wife can be a great asset and determining your mental and emotional health. Be thankful for that gift.

### Your personality and signs

Be self aware of your condition. I was in my mid 50s before I realized I was an introvert. I have been in public speaking since

1963. The assumption was that I was an extrovert (many people told me so). Several years after my breakdown I discovered almost accidentally about this when I tried to figure out what went wrong. The more I was around people (all the time), the more I was challenged, became agitated, etc. Then I discovered that if I need to refresh myself I had to be away from people.

Look for signs in your body, in your reasoning, in your reactions, in response. They can provide warning signs that something isn't right mentally or emotionally. The longer you delay your seeking help the worse those signs will be.

### Triggers

This may surprise some people, but something can be said, done, or a picture, or a smell can serve as a trigger. Often it will trigger memories of something good or bad. The triggers of something bad are deceptive, because we may not recognize it as such. But these triggers can instantly change how you respond, think, etc. Interestingly smell is one of the strongest. A few months ago I caught just a whiff of a smell, and it immediately took me back to 1953. I could see, sense, and hear people from 63 years ago—all in an instant.

### Psychiatrists/Psychologists

Mental health is a major issue within the church and amongst pastors. Medicine does not always work. But the insights and advancements in mental health in the past decade can be a valuable resource for you. One helpful resource is <http://www.churchtherapy.com>, run by Kristen Kansiewicz, Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Lynn, MA. Kristen has been the on-staff counselor at East Coast International Church since 2005. Her passion is to help churches and pastors provide mental health care within the church and for the church. There are others. Your mental and emotional health are worth it, if you need them.

Some of the former forbidden topics to discuss include: depression, suicide, explosive anger, abuse, bi-polar disorder, etc. These are just a few of the mental health topics that plague us in this sinful world. If you live with any of these or others, you know the challenges. If you are married to someone who battles that, you know. If you are a parent of one who struggles, you know the importance of getting help for each person within the family system.

## 1. 3. Marriage

The stress on a pastor's marriage can be overwhelming at times. So the one whom God has brought closest to you, and who has known you better than anyone, is often ignored or shut out when you need the most help. I tell the prospective husband of those planning on getting married: "She is God's gift to you. Listen to her. Woe to you if you do not!" For that kind of marriage to occur and grow it takes time, energy, and commitment.

Time with your wife is not just "an activity" that you can fulfill in a 30 minute block. Every moment you spend with her is an investment in her, in you, and in your marriage. Time requires attention, concentration, a willingness to let her talk—without you being in a pastor role. She needs a husband who honors her, supports her, loves her, walks with her, through the worst of times as well as the best of times. She may feel that she doesn't want to burden you. But husbands, if you don't allow her to talk straight up, you are not respecting her, and God's unique, privileged role for her: for you, with you, beside you. Give her your time, your heart,

you constancy, your self. God has called you to that, even above being a pastor.

One vital area of common support is praying and reading the Bible together. Surprisingly, most pastors find it initially awkward, even if they have personally been doing that. But this isn't a one-up-man-ship kind of comparison with others. Set realistic limits. Know when to do the reading. It took my wife and I several years to discover the best time for reading. She is not a late night person—I am. Finally we chose just before she is ready for bed. We have done that for many years now. And it works well for us, not set by time, but her time.

The Bible reading time is not another class you are teaching. This is a shared time to let God speak to both of you. Find something that you are both okay with. We read through a book of the Bible night after night, but we only read 1-2 paragraphs at a time—that's enough. We sometimes talk about, even wrestle with, some of the harder readings. But sometimes we just read and then smile. It is enough.

#### 1. 4. Spiritual

I am addressing spiritual care as the final topic, not because it is least, but because it is fundamental as a person and as a pastor. In the busyness of being a pastor, the pastor can lose his way spiritually. The more gifted he is the longer he can run on fumes of spirituality of past years, and academic prowess can extend such an appearance. It will not last. The reality is this: we are in a daily battle against sin, the world, and Satan, and we need daily nourishment in the Word—not reheated leftovers from a retreat five years ago. We need it for spiritual survival—daily, first and foremost.

What preparatory things that can help us in the spiritual fitness of life as a pastor?

a. **a. Daily reading of Scripture:** We have an abundance of resources to help with this: *Treasury of Daily Prayer*, or *Peak Performance "Bible Reading Plan"* (Downloadable) [CPH], or *Today's Light* (2 year reading plan) [CPH], and many more. I suggest staying away from "devotionals" in which Scripture reading is a very small part of the reading (usually 1-2 verses). The goal is to read Scripture.

a. **b. Reading for sermons and Bible studies:** Here I refer to a longer term goal. That is, it involves extended reading of a specific book or topic, but several times. Even with lay people I explain this in terms of reading Ephesians. For one week each day read one chapter of Ephesians. Then one week read Ephesians 1 each day, in week 2 Ephesians 2, the next week, etc. And eventually read the entire book each day. While many are overwhelmed with me saying that, they begin to catch on and can, in fact, do it.

b. **c. Study Greek (and Hebrew) texts for sermons and Bible studies:** Even if you are rusty, tackle one verse each day, if necessary, look up each word in a dictionary. Within a few weeks, you will be able to read 2-3 verses without looking up words. This will strengthen your grasp of Scripture, deepen your sermons and Bible studies. Your congregation will benefit in the process. (See Bibliography)

c. **d. Read Greek NT regularly:** For this phase, you develop the ability to read larger texts. Don't be unrealistic. You probably won't be able to sit down and read the Greek text of Galatians in

one sitting. Rather, as you learn more of the Greek, then you can read more and even faster. An excellent resource is *The UBS Greek New Testament* (Bibliography). It lists all words that occur more than 30 times in the appendix. Then throughout the GNT, those words with less frequency are listed in footnotes. Very handy and does increase your reading ability. Many others exist that can do the same.

d. **e. Take one of our online seminary courses:** For \$50 you can audit a seminary course, learning or relearning as you go. This winter, I am teaching Matthew, in the spring Ephesians and Hermeneutics. You can take any of the seminary courses (based on class size limits).

e. **f. Continue to develop your prayer life:** Luther offers guides in his Catechism. Other resources include: *Starck's Prayer Book, For the Life of the Church* (C. F. W. Walther), *Lutheran Book of Prayer, My Prayer Book* [CPH]. One caution: avoid books about prayer (they have a place, but secondary to what we discuss here).

#### 1. 5. Coordinated

Just a note that these are all part of one comprehensive perspective on care for yourself. Don't look at individual parts, as isolated, but complementary care approaches.

#### Conclusion

Martin Luther noted that three things make a theologian (not a professional or pastor but every Christian): *Oratio*, *Meditatio*, and *Tentatio*. *Oratio* is prayer, *Meditatio* is reading of Scripture, and *Tentatio* is variously translated angst, agony of life, anguish, trials. The theologians does become so with the first two, rather in the context of *Tentatio* is when *Oratio* and *Meditatio* take on significance for growth in holding to God's promises. So as you face the *Tentatio* of life, the development of *Oratio* and *Meditatio* become genuine reflects of the soul that struggles. As Christians our goal isn't to eliminate our *Tentatio*, although that may indeed be a priority. Rather in the midst of *Tentatio* we know even more of Christ's life and sacrifice for us.

Even more, Luther wrote:

Therefore I admonish you, especially those of you who are to become instructors of consciences, as well as each of you who individually, that you exercise yourselves by study, by reading, by meditation, and by prayer, so that in temptation you will be able to instruct consciences, both your own and others, console them, and take them from Law to grace, from active righteousness to passive righteousness, in short, from Moses to Christ. (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 26, *Lectures on Galatians*, p. 10)

May we all take to heart what God has given us. May we look at our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual situation and seek ever more our God of grace and mercy.

#### Reading Suggestions

Eyer, Richard C. *Pastoral Care Under the Cross: God in the Midst of Suffering*. Concordia College, 1995.

Kansiewicz, Kristen. <http://www.churchtherapy.com>.

Miller, C. John. *The Heart of a Servant Leader: Letters From Jack Miller*. P & R Publishing, 2004.



# FREE *Garage Sale*

at Faith Lutheran Church in Holstein, IA

By Lori Leonard Reyman



The biggest outreach and community service event our church sponsors each year is the Free Garage and our sixth annual event on Saturday, Sept. 17, was bigger and better than ever. The slogan for the event is: "If you see something you can use, simply take it home with you." Everyone from throughout the area is encouraged to come and look through the racks and displays. Faith volunteers receive hundreds of boxes and bags of items each year. Everything is sized and neatly displayed so guests can browse, visit with friends old and new and enjoy the inviting environment of this downtown church. We are helping more people from a broader region with each passing year, and we are continually learning how to best meet their needs. In the past three years we have hosted between 100 and 140 people from more than a dozen communities. This we are excited to report we hosted over 150 people from at least 17 communities (including a woman from Walker, Minnesota, who was shopping for foster children). It's impossible to know an exact head count, as we don't require people to sign in; we merely encourage it. Some only write their town and not the number in their group or family, and not all are English-speaking, so keep in mind the numbers we have are minimums.

We have Faith members and Pastor greeting families as they enter our church and this year we prayed in the narthex with about 40 shoppers when we opened the doors to those who had been waiting in line. Through this project we are seeing scores of people passing through our doors who otherwise would not; allowing us to work to fulfill the mission of our church to "proclaim the Word of Jesus Christ and love our neighbors as ourselves." The Free Garage Sale committee wants to thank all the people who donated items, helped unpack, fold, sort and size clothing, toys and household items, worked during the event and then helped afterwards to clean and pack up remaining items and haul to Gospel Mission in Sioux City. Special thanks to Mark and Karen Borchers for all their help, including their contribution of more than 70 dozen eggs. And thank you to all the anonymous donors who gave more furniture items than we've ever seen before! With FGS 2016 behind us, we are already planning for next September and we pray each of you will join us in this special outreach effort next year. We have a spot for everyone, sitting or standing, one hour or many! As our event gets bigger our need for more hands gets greater so please help. May God bless our friends in Faith – new and old – from Albert City, Arthur, Battle Creek, Cherokee, Correctionville, Danbury, Early, Galva, Holstein, Ida Grove, Newell, Odebolt, Primghar, Schaller, Spencer, Storm Lake and Walker, Minn. Praise God for his many blessings. Faith In Action committee: Bridget Friedrichsen, Lori Leonard Reyman, Sheryl Leonard, Tracy Terry.

## FREE *Garage Sale*

**Faith Lutheran Church  
of Holstein**

**Sat., Sept. 17  
8 a.m.—Noon**

*If you see an item you can use, simply take it home with you!*

**Want to donate FALL or WINTER clothing?**  
Drop off at Faith Lutheran  
113 N. Main St., Holstein  
Monday, Sept. 12, 3-7 p.m.  
or Wednesday, Sept. 14, 3-7 p.m.  
*No cribs or car seats allowed by law*

**ONLY CLEAN ITEMS ACCEPTED**  
712-368-2850  
faith@faithholstein.com







# Just and Sinner Conference 2016

By Rev. Jordan Cooper

The second annual Just and Sinner Conference was held at Faith Lutheran Church in Watseka, Illinois from October 27th through 29th. Our topic this year was, "Christ, Culture, and the Two Kingdoms." We had three speakers: Pastor Jordan Cooper of Faith Lutheran, Pastor Eric Phillips of Concordia Lutheran Church in Nashville, TN and popular author Dr. Gene Edward Veith. Pastor Lewis Polzin also preached at two worship services.

Martin Luther spoke about two distinct kingdoms that we, as Christians, are citizens of. We live in the Kingdom of God through faith. In this kingdom, God rules through the gospel. He grants us the forgiveness of sins and the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But, we don't exist only in the Kingdom of God; we also live within the world and the broader culture. We are in a world with both believers and unbelievers. In this kingdom, we are not ruled by the gospel, but by the law.

Pastor Cooper presented on the distinction between the two kingdoms, and explained this idea in light of some contemporary perspectives on the relationship between Christianity and culture. He demonstrated that the kingdom of the world (often called the "kingdom of the left") is not a purely secular sphere. We might be tempted to think that Scripture is only relevant to the church, and that the culture and state are not ruled by God. To the contrary, God is King of both Kingdoms. He simply governs them differently. God rules the church through the gospel, but he governs the culture and state through the law. Whether or not people in the world acknowledge God as Lord, he is King of all creation. This means that as Christians, we should be intimately involved in the culture, as we strive for the good of our neighbors in this world in service to our King.

Dr. Gene Veith spoke further about God's involvement in the left-hand realm. He demonstrated that God is involved in all things that happen in this world, whether we acknowledge them as sacred or secular. Martin Luther spoke about God using his creatures as his "masks" through which he works in the world. He uses each of us as his own hands and feet to accomplish his will. Dr. Veith applied this to economics, and demonstrated how God is involved in governing economics systems, which is sometimes viewed as an area which exists apart from God's sovereign control.

Pastor Eric Phillips spoke about the relationship between Luther's idea of the two kingdoms and the ancient Christian writer St. Augustine, who spoke similarly of two cities. Like Luther, Augustine recognized the fact that Christians are members of the kingdom of God, and that we also live in the culture surrounded by both believers and unbelievers. Pastor Phillips challenged us to think about how we are to apply these ideas in our American culture today.

Following the conference, there was a special Reformation Day service held where Pastor Spotts and Pastor Polzin assisted with the liturgy. Also pictured is future AALC seminarian Michael Salinas. Following the service, Pastor Spotts gave a presentation on his Wittenberg Door Campus ministry.

All of the conference lectures are available to view on the Just and Sinner Youtube channel. You can find links to the videos on [JustandSinner.com](http://JustandSinner.com) and on the Just and Sinner app which is available in the iTunes and Google Play stores.





## American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) Professors, Fall 2016



REV. JORDAN COOPER  
Jordan and Lisa  
Wateka, IL



Dr. Adam Francisco  
Concordia Univ.  
Irvine, CA



Rev. Dr. Craig  
Henningfield  
Craig and Sheryl  
Denver, CO



Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins  
Curtis and Debbie  
Presiding Pastor, TAALC  
Defiance, OH



Rev. Richard Shields  
President, ALTS  
Rich and Cindy  
Frazier Park, CA



Rev. Dave Spotts  
Dave and Martha  
Columbia, MO

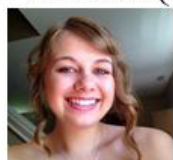
## Master of Arts (ALTS) Students, Fall 2016



Lisa Cooper  
Lisa and Jordan  
Wateka, IL



Janet Price  
Albuquerque, NM



Faith Rosebrough  
Grand Forks, ND



Kathy Strauch  
Livonia, MI



Angie Wagner  
Onarga, IL



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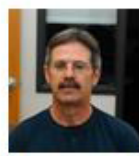
## American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) Seminarists, Fall 2016



Nigel Brown  
Nigel and Kelly  
Yorktown, VA



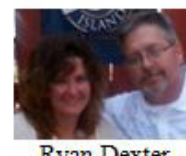
Kevin Bullock  
Kevin and Liza  
Wales, United Kingdom



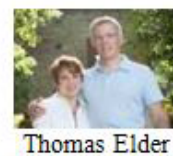
Michael Callahan  
Williston, ND



Shane Cleminson  
Shane and Abby  
Munster, IN



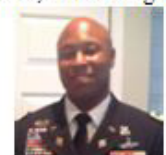
Ryan Dexter  
Ryan and Gina  
Wayland, IA



Thomas Elder  
Thomas and Martha  
Newark, DE



James Graham  
James and Vanessa  
Aurora, IL



CW3 Kris Johnson  
Kris and Adrienne  
Fayetteville, NC



John Linch  
John and Deb  
Ames, IA



Abraham McNally  
Evansdale, IA



Alexander McNally  
Evansdale, IA



Rev. John Morley III  
John and Gigi  
Casa Grande, AZ



Rev. Scott Neumann  
Scott and Vicky  
Williston, ND



Bruce "Oly" Olson  
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Nathan Rinne  
Nathan and Sheila  
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Michael Rokenbrodt  
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Rev. Chris Rosebrough  
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Charles Upole  
Charles and Kristi  
Hinckley, OH



Brian Vanderlinden  
Brian and Oksana  
Parma, OH



Andrew Virkus  
Andrew and Pamela  
Duluth, MN

*May God's face shine  
upon you and may He  
teach you His Word.*

*-Psalm 119:135*



# Coming Home!

by Larry Farner

Like the proverbial Prodigal Son, after 70 years, Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Bremerton, Washington has returned to its roots. Beginning in January of 1946 as a home ministry, the members of a small ALC Lutheran congregation moved into a World War II Quonset Hut in May of 1946, completed construction of their first "official" Church and held their first Christmas program there in December 1949 and celebrated Thanksgiving service in their current Church building in 1956. Like many ALC Lutheran Churches, Emmanuel transitioned into the ELCA in January 1988 and following the "split" in the ELCA Synod, prayerfully and with conviction that they were following the will of our Lord God, in September 2010, became one of the pioneer Churches of the "new" AALC Synod organization of Lutheran churches. To celebrate their "journey of faith," the members of Emmanuel decided that 2016 would mark a significant point in this journey, which began in 1946. So, early in 2015, planning began, committees were formed, and a Chairman of the 70th Anniversary project was selected to "make it happen." On Sunday, September 18th, 2016 it all came together! 176 former members traveled hundreds of miles to join with the current members of Emmanuel to participate in a program whose theme was, "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, to give you a future and a hope." (Jer. 29:11). The program included a narrated slide presentation of the history of the congregation, special music, guest speakers, and a "banquet" put on by the "hosts" (current members) of Emmanuel Lutheran Church. It took many volunteers and many hours to pull off this event. The Emmanuel Day Care, whose student body is nearly equal to the average numbers in Sunday worship provided commemorative coffee cups. The chairman (leader) of this year-long project Sharie Adrig, who was raised in a Christian Science church but embraced the Lutheran tradition of her husband Glen worked planned, pleaded, and prayed that this special Lord's day event would, God willing, be the success that it most surely was. Everyone involved agreed that Emmanuel Lutheran Church had indeed, "come full circle."



Pastors left to right: A. Gordon Christensen, 1988-97; Tim Cartwright, 2000-present; Les Foss, 1976-79; John Foss, 2000-03





# The Installation of the Rev. Dave Spotts

Several weeks ago I started promoting my big event. Being formally installed as the missionary pastor for Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry was a very serious time. We invited the Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins, Presiding Pastor of The American Association of Lutheran Churches to officiate. He brought along Pastor Dean Stoner, National Missions Developer.

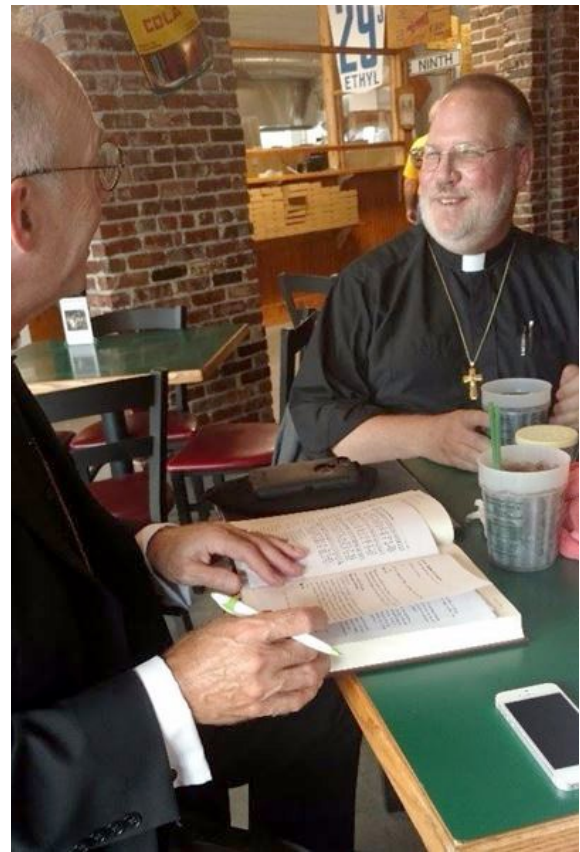
Our team of “men in black” was ready to go throughout the day. The weather even cooperated. Rain stopped for several hours. After a Bible discussion group, a visit for discussion and prayer with several faculty members, and a drop in at the administration building to say hello, we made our final preparations for the installation service.

When a pastor is installed, he normally makes some very specific promises. They include hearing confession of sins confidentially, speaking Christ’s words of forgiveness and grace, teaching the Scriptures, being ready to act as the Lord’s hands in the community, and, above all, being faithful in prayer for the people. The pastor promises to be a man who will stand up boldly with God’s Word no matter what. Standing with colleagues like Pastor Leins and Pastor Stoner is a great encouragement. Just the same, it requires fortification. Shakespeare’s is now open again. We enjoyed one of many working meals hosted there daily.

Not only did our leaders from TAALC join in for the installation, but a number of people from Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod congregations in the area attended. Two area Missouri Synod pastors were able to participate. It’s wonderful to know that I’m working in cooperation with these folks. We are definitely on the same team!

We had a great reception afterward - lots of food, drinks, and laughter! The highlight was being able to welcome some new friends into our home and get to know them better. One, an international researcher, had never been in an American home before. There’s plenty to do, welcoming people to our community, welcoming them into the life we have.

It’s been a great month! Let’s keep walking together.



# An Update from Hope Lutheran

By Pastor Ryan Dexter

There have been many exciting things happening at Hope Lutheran recently. First, we began conducting an “attendance campaign” with a weekly focus of reaching out to our unchurched, unsaved family and friends. We called the event our Harvest Celebration, tying the celebration of the field harvest to the spiritual harvest. The message title for the big event was “And Then Comes the Harvest.” This all took place on November 6th. This also capitalized on the fact that it was the daylight savings weekend giving everyone an extra hour of sleep. The week following, we planned another event called the Hope Family Hayride and Bonfire. This took place in the afternoon and evening of November 13th.



*Photos by Karla Rebling*

On Friend Day we had 89 in church. Of those 89 people, 31 were new to the church. Of the guests invited, they themselves brought four extra people with them (included in the 31). That means that nearly 35% of that Sunday attendance were new people to Hope. Essentially all of those who were in attendance as guests were unchurched and/or unsaved. From those thus far visited, and that is almost all now, one came to accept Christ as their Savior! She is scheduled to be baptized this coming Sunday. Last Sunday, we saw 53 people in church, with a number of the Hope family out—BUT at least 11 of those guests returned and they themselves brought 2 more with them, meaning 28% of the congregation present were new folks! Sunday night’s hayride resulted in 41 in attendance with 14 of them being new people, four of them visitors from three weeks ago and two more who could not come Sunday morning!

Every one of the guests from Friend Day are now receiving invites to attend our Wednesday night Advent series to begin November 30th. We also have been sending postcard invites to all who attended our Chuckwagon Dinner held in the Brighton City Park in September.

Of course, every guest received a thank you letter, a phone call, and home visits are still happening. In the thank you letter they find a self-addressed, stamped post card with three questions about their time at Hope. That card goes out to any first-time guest. This allows us an opportunity to constantly analyze what we are doing and why.

God is stirring lives and blessing the prayers and efforts of each one who is reaching out!





# Telling God Where to Go

by Rev. Dean Johansen

**W**ho hasn't heard, I can pray to God anywhere. I don't have to be in church! It is certainly true that you can praise God in prayer anywhere on this earth of His creation. So...you are going to meet God by telling God where to go? Try this. Contact our President and tell him where you will meet him. Better, call a friend and tell them that you will meet them at such a place at a specific time. Do that on three occasions. If they show three times it would be best to re-evaluate your relationship. Every person on this planet has a busy schedule, some more than others. Although God is not limited to time and space; common is the attitude that God meets us when we decide. God has already invited us at a specific time and place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is taught and preached; and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is freely offered through the Lord's Table/Supper/Eucharist. It is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that God is present for us in a mystical and tangible way. Telling people where to go is ridiculous; and telling God where to go is absurdity. This is spiritual delusion that we direct God where to go; more delusional than telling our President where he will meet us.

So how do people get to the place where they tell God when and where to go? It is in how they define God, and define themselves.

1. CREATOR - If god is a pantheistic power that is infused in everything and is not a being, it is easy to see how any person would consider themselves superior. Why wouldn't we? We have self-awareness, intelligence, creativity, and personality. We are clearly superior to a non-personal god.

2. SAVIOR – If god is NOT our savior, then we are superior. If sinners don't perceive their sin, then we can tell god where and when to meet.

3. CRISIS - The time of crisis comes where God blesses us by awakening us out of our spiritual delusion; and we start to ask who is God, and who am I? Perhaps we aren't as righteous as we thought. Those in need listen. Those not in need tell.

4. DOCTRINE - We teach God as eternal, holy (perfect), Creator-Savior God in Confirmation, bible study, teaching, and preaching; centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We also teach the sin (state) of human beings and God's way to deal with sin in our lives. "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sin." Therefore, we avoid the error of an impersonal god; "use the force Luke, use the force." The beginning question is: Do I need God? Scripture in John 3:16-19 defines all relationships to God as to Jesus Christ. For Christians this is ultimately a relationship of trust, not cognitive knowledge. Trust is getting to know someone, not merely information or facts about them. This is why Jesus Christ said of "*brephos*" and "*paidion*," two New Testament Greek words meaning respectively; "babies and infants" and "little children"; that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. (Luke 18:15-17) How is this possible? Because faith is ultimately trusting God, as Abraham did. Rejoice in the Lord Always! When we don't trust God, we can tell God where to go.



# Beet Piling Report

By David Fagerlund

**K**ongsvinger Church, also known as “A Beacon on the Prairie,” is a rural church located at the intersection of North Dakota, Canada and Minnesota. Agriculture is one of the major industries in this Red River Valley. Fall is a busy time of year, mainly due to the harvesting of potatoes, corn, beans and sugar beets. Kongsvinger women have played an important part in this harvest. For the past 15 years women from Kongsvinger have been providing hot meals for all laborers coming and going from the Alvarado beet piler. This was one of our “money-making” projects that provided funds



for our treasury. Prior to 2015 our “customers” would pay pre-determined prices for their meals. 2015 was the year, however, that we felt lead by God and challenged by TAALC leadership to follow the Bible’s teaching—“to care for our neighbors and to trust in God’s leading.” We continued to provide hot meals, however, the price was changed to “No Charge”! A glass jar was provided, however, customers were not pressured to donate. Customers also were informed that their donations would be distributed towards local charities/groups. Over the past two years, 100% of money taken in has been divided and given to area organizations including The Alvarado and Oslo (MN) Fire and Rescue, East Grand Forks and Warren (MN) Food Shelves, the local Women’s Pregnancy Center, Salvation Army and Red Cross.

We were fortunate to receive grants from Thrivent and also our TAALC synod. This allowed us to purchase meat, supplies and other ingredients. A big thank you to those who made it directly or indirectly possible for us to do this. We made changes to our menu this year. Normally we have been serving a variety of brats, hamburgers, beef roast, chicken wraps, lettuce or macaroni salad, along with cookies/bars, chips and beverages. (Note: We have purchased larger brown paper bags to use next year). A breakfast burrito was added to our menu this fall, allowing us to extend our day to 10 hours! Each year it is common to shut down all production at the beet piler because of excessive heat. This year was very unusual. Our area had about 40 inches of rain from mid-summer continuing through the fall. This is twice as much precipitation than what is received during a “normal” summer. The first week of the 2016 harvest was interrupted due to additional rain! The trucks and other machinery began sinking in the mud both at the beet site and in the fields. After only a couple of successful days, it was necessary to shut down for 5 consecutive days allowing the soil to dry. It wasn’t the best year for farmers, however, we are assured that God will provide. Once again, the money we actually took in was not significantly higher than other years. What is hard to explain is that the money we sent to each organization INCREASED—once again!!!! You are not required to be driving a semi tractor/trailer or tandem truck should you want to stop by next fall to visit us. We just ask that you BE CAREFUL! Just look for the small gray house along Highway 2 with a L on both the front and back! (Thanks Alvarado Lions Club!)

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